

MISERICORDIAM VOLO:

OR, THE

Pharisees 2.
LESSON.

S H E W I N G

The *Impiety* and *Unreasonableness*
of contending for outward Formes
and Ceremonies, to the Violation of
Obedience, Charity, and the Publick
Peace.

*Haud dubitem affirmare eos qui falluntur & tamen
fraternam communionem cum aliis retinere parati
sunt, esse coram Deo magis excusatos, quam qui
veras opiniones in iis controversiis tuentur, & mu-
tuam communionem cum aliis Ecclesiis etiam defi-
derantibus, aspernantur. Davenant. pro pace Ec-
clesia, p. 24.*

L O N D O N,

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THE P R E F A C E

*Concerning the
Ceremonies of the Church.*

IT is granted by all sober Protestants, that the Church hath power of making Canons and Constitutions, for Decency and Order in the publick worship of God; and not only to prescribe the necessary circumstances of time and place; but also to continue and establish those ancient rites of the Christian Church, which were practised in the primitive times, and are in themselves of an indifferent nature; which authority of the Church was asserted in the *Augustan* confession, and particularly by Mr. *Calvin*, and other worthy persons in the Reformation. Which our Reformers also did assume to themselves, as is declared in the 20th. Article; and hath been practised

*Instit. l. 4.
c. 10. S. 27.
See T. C.
l. 1. p. 37.*

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*Acts 15.
28.*

*1 Corinth.
11. 16.*

*Exalt col-
led. p. 26.*

*Saints care
for Church
Communi-
on. P. 334.*

raised and defended against all Dissen-
ters, as well by Scripture, as by Anti-
quity, and right reason: and therefore
those persons that condemn the Cere-
monies of the Church, which the Mar-
tyrs and Confessors of our Church, did
establiſh upon mature deliberation, do
reflect too severely upon those Wor-
thies, who with equal prudence and
constancy, did commend them to us.

And the *Royal Martyr* was so tender
of their reputation, that in his answer
to the *Parliaments Remonstrance*, he
promiseth to reform the Ceremonies
with these cautions. *Or*, That the Re-
formation were pursued with such mo-
desty and submission, that the quiet of
the Kingdom were not disturbed. *Or*,
Nor the decency and comeliness of
God's service discountenanced. *Or*,
Nor the pious, sober, and devout actions of
those reverend persons, who were the
first labourers in the blessed Reforma-
tion, be scandalized and defamed. And
some that are not friends to Ceremo-
nies, have vindicated those persons in
this respect. 'What shall we say of re-
'verend *Ridley*, (saith Master *Crofton*)
'heartly *Hooper*, sincere *Sanders*, trusty
Taylor,

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‘*Tayler*, and most brave *Bradford*, with
‘the cloud of Witnesses that served
‘God by the Liturgy to their last
‘breath, even in their most personal
‘and dying devotions, and suffered al-
‘so for so doing, having the same ob-
‘jected against them by their Persecu-
‘tors, and also pressed the people, and
‘their choicest friends, to adhere to it,
‘and serve God by it. And however
‘some succeeding Christians have desi-
‘red some reformation of the Liturgy,
‘they have constantly, and with due
‘devotion served God in the use there-
‘of, and defended the same against the
‘*censorious Brownists*, and rigid *Sepa-*
‘*ratists*.--- And the first reformation
had the perfection of substance, though
not of degrees, Gods true worship was
restored to a right order of ministrati-
on, the Ordinances of God did then
truly exist, as to their substance, and
salvably as to their Ministerial mode
towards the people; otherwise those
holy Men had not wherein to rejoyce
before God and the World. And cer-
tainly they did not entayl a Popish, Su-
perstitious, or Idolatrous Yoke (as
some call the Ceremonies) on the
Church

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Church of God. Mr. *Cartwright* was one of the first Opposers of the Ceremonies, and instead of acquainting you with the Answers of Arch-Bishop *Whitgift*, and judicious *Hooker*, to his arguments, it will be sufficient to say, that Mr. *Cartwright* himself hath said enough to confute the dissenters of our times, for first he opposed them, only as inconvenient, not unlawful: and perswaded Ministers rather to wear the Garments than cease their Ministry, and in his *Evangelical Harmony*, on *Luke 22.* (à v. 14. ad. 19.) he saith, that kneeling in the receiving of the Sacrament, being incommodious in its own nature, and made more incommodious by *Popish* Superstition, is not so to be rejected, that for the sake thereof we should abstain from the Sacrament, because the thing is not in its own nature unlawful --- And what his judgment was in the case of Separation, appears in a Letter of his to Mr. *Harrison* lately published: And in another Letter to his Sister *Anne Stubs*, reproving her for stumbling at this stone, that because of some defects in a Church, instead of concluding that
Church

2d. Reply.
p. 262.

p. 877.
Edix. ult.

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Church to be imperfect, she concluded it to be no Church. The wise and holy Mr. *Hildersham*, *Bradshaw*, *Page*, *Ball*, *Gifford*, and other learned Non-conformists of old did foresee and greatly fear this Spirit (saith Mr. *Baxter*.) But this Spirit being very troublesome and pragmatistical, the most learned of the dissenters did alway endeavour to moderate it, as well by their quiet and peaceable practice, as by their learned and earnest arguments, and exhortations to unity in the publick Worship. And accordingly when King *James*, shortly after his entry into the Throne, had appointed the conference at *Hampton Court*, where Doctor *Raynolds*, Dr. *Chaderton*, Dr. *Spark*, and others were appointed to discourse the matters in controversie, with some *Episcopal Divines*: They were so far from affirming the ceremonies to be unlawful, that they would not have it known that any of that party were so weak, as to affirm it; and Dr. *Raynolds* was so far satisfied, that before his death he solemnly declared himself to be of the communion of the *Church of England*, and desired absolution according to the form

*Cure of
Divisions;
p. 188.*

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form appointed in the Liturgy. About this time Bishop *Morton*, Doctor *Barges*, Mr. *Sprint*, and others did most rationally; and irrefragably assert the innocency of the Ceremonies, and the necessity of the Ministers conforming rather than to suffer deprivation, and of the peoples, rather than to be deprived of the Ordinances of Christ. I intend not a History of the transactions in this business, and therefore shall only give you a brief account of it, from the beginning of our unhappy troubles. The *Long Parliament* in their Petition, and *Remonstrance* joyned with it, *December 15. 1642.* inform us of some Malignant parties, whose proceedings evidently appeared to be, mainly, for the advantage and increase of Popery, and were composed, set up, and acted, by the subtle practice of the *Jesuits*, and other Engineers and Factors for *Rome*, who had so far prevailed, as to corrupt divers of the Bishops and others, in prime places of the Church, and p. 20. they intimate, that Idolatry, and Popish Ceremonies were introduced to the Church, by command of the Bishops; and the people

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people were not only debarred the Church, but expelled the Kingdom. And that those were counted fittest for Ecclesiastical preferment, and soonest attained it, who were most officious in promoting Superstition, most virulent in railing against Godliness and honesty. We desire (say they) to unburthen the Consciences of men, of needless and Superstitious Ceremonies, suppress Innovations, and take away the monuments of Idolatry. To this His Majesty of Blessed Memory answered thus. " The fears for Religion, may haply be, not only as it may be innovated by the *Romish* party, but as it is accompanied with some Ceremonies, at which some tender Consciences really are, or pretend to be scandalized. Concerning Religion, as there may be any suspicion of favour, or inclination to the *Papists*, we are willing to declare to all the World, that as we have been from our childhood brought up in, and practised the Religion now established, so it is well known, we have (not contented simply with the principles of our

" Educa-

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» Education) given a good proportion
» of our time and pains, to the exa-
» mination of the grounds of this Re-
» ligion, as it is different from that of
» Rome, and are from our Soul so
» fully satisfied, and assured that it is
» the most pure, and agreeable to the
» Sacred Word of God, of any Reli-
» gion now practised in the Christian
» world, that as we believe we can
» maintain the same by unanswerable
» Reasons, so we hope we should readi-
» ly seal to it by the effusion of our
» Blood, if it pleased God to call us to
» that Sacrifice. And therefore no-
» thing can be so acceptable to us, as
» any proposition which may contri-
» bute to the advancement of it here,
» or the propagation of it abroad, being
» the only means of drawing down the
» Blessings of God upon our selves and
» this Nation. And we have been ex-
» tremely unfortunate if this Profession
» of ours be wanting to our people---
» For differences among our selves, for
» matters indifferent in their own na-
» ture, we shall, in tenderness to any
» number of our loving Subjects, very
» willingly comply with the advice of
» our

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"our Parliament, that some Law may
"be made, for the exemption of ten-
"der Consciences from punishment,
"or persecution, for such Ceremonies,
"and in such cases, which by the judg-
"ment of most men are held to be mat-
"ters indifferent, and of some to be
"absolutely unlawful. (Provided &c.
"as before mentioned, under the three
"cautions.) To that clause which con-
"cerns corruptions (as you stile them)
"in Religion, in Church Government,
"and in Discipline, and the removing
"such unnecessary Ceremonies, as
"weak Consciences might check at:
"That for any illegal Innovations
"which may have crept in, we shall
"willingly concur in the removal of
"them, but we are very sorry to hear
"in such general terms, corruption in
"Religion objected, since we are per-
"swaded in Conscience, that no
"Church on Earth can be found; that
"professeth the true Religion with
"more purity of Doctrine, than the
"Church of *England* doth, nor where
"the Government and Discipline are
"joyntly more beautified and free
"from Superstition, than as they are
I here

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” here established by Law, which by
” the Grace of God we will with con-
” stancy maintain, while we live, in
” their purity and glory, not only a-
” gainst all invasions of *Popery*, but also
” from the irreverence of those Schisma-
” ticks and Separatists, wherewith of
” late this Kingdom and City abound,
” to the great dishonour and hazard of
” Church and State. Doubtless they
had very much of the nature of the
Adder in them, who instead of being
charmed into a quiet and meek sub-
mission by these most pious, gracious,
sincere Reasons and condescensions, did
precipitate themselves, and the three
Nations to those horrible confusions,
which that Prophetick, as well as
Royal Spirit foretold, for immediately
after, the people of the Land being
frighted by frequent remonstrances of
fears and jealousies of *Popery* and Su-
perstition, run themselves into cer-
tain snares as to their Estates, by the
insatiable oppression of their new Ma-
sters, and their Lives, by their want
of Loyalty, and as to their Consciences
by illegal Oaths and Covenants, till
the beauty of Religion was destroyed
for

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for want of Order and Reverence, and the substance of it devoured by Sects and Heresies of all kinds. And this mostly for Reformation of Ceremonies, for the Doctrine needed it not. I do even tremble to relate in a corner, what a Preacher who was then of great repute, spake in the most eminent meeting of the Nation (the present Parliament, Anno 1656,) in these words. Worthy Patriots, you that are Rulers, in this present Parliament-- Praised be God, who hath delivered us from Prelatical innovations, Altar-genu-flexions and cringings, with crossings, and all that Popish trash, and trumpery; and truly, I speak no more, than what I have often thought, and said--- The removal of these insupportable burdens, countervails for the Bloud and Treasure shed and spent in these late distractions; nor did I as yet ever hear of any godly men, that desired (were it possible) to purchase their friends, or mony again, at so dear a rate, as the return of these, to have those Soul-burthening Antichristian yokes imposed upon us; if any such here be, I am sure, that desire is

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be part of a self godliness, and I profess myself that, to be none of the number.] Can any that bears the name of a Christian hear such things without horror, especially when he shall seriously consider what a deluge of blood had overflown the land, The King being Murdered about Eight years before, and the Sword, and the Axe having glutted themselves with the Blood of many Noble Heroes, and learned Clergy-men? And besides the many thousands that dyed for their Religion, and Loyalty, there were very many that perished also in Rebellion, against God and the King. He had little charity for his Brethren, that would not on such easie conditions, redeem them from the grave and hell; if we may argue from a Parable, *Dives* had more charity in that place of Torment, than was in this Preachers breast, and if this be a mark of godliness, *Satan* needs not to be transformed, to pass for an Angel of light, sure I am nothing can be more opposite to this Evangelical truth, which the Text that is before us commends, (*viz.*) of preferring money before Sacrifice. I commend

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mend it therefore to your serious consideration, whether those persons, who so pertinaciously insist upon the abolishing of our Ceremonies, as to increase our divisions, and engage us again in Bloud and confusion, are not acted by a like Spirit of perverseness, that delighting it self to live in the fire of contention takes pleasure in drawing others and tormenting them in the like flames.

At the happy return of our Dear Sovereign, who after the example of his Martyred Father, was careful to see the Church established in its beauty, we found this evil Spirit so violently to oppose as if it had taken seven worse than it self, to secure the possession which it had in the hearts of the people, being in danger of being cast out: then was *Nehustan* sent abroad to perswade the people, that the *Liturgie, Ceremonies, and other things used in the Church of England*, ought not to be imposed, nor retained, but utterly extirpated, and laid aside, and that every one in his place ought to do his part to the abolishing of it, and not sit still in the midst of such defilements and snares, but discover their hatred of them, decline

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their use, and endeavour the rooting of them out; and all upon this ground, that things which have been abused in false Worship must be laid aside. Then comes another Boreas from the North (whence most of our evils came) called a Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies, which he explains to be, a contending for the purity of Christ, against the corruptions of Anti-christ, and this Spirit, as if he were indeed of the triumphant party, leads in chains no meaner persons, than Hooke, Morion, Burges, Sprint, Paybody, Andrews, Saravia, Tilen, Spotswood, Lindsey, Forbes, &c. who were all particularly confuted, and vanquished by him, as he boasted. But this pitiful man dealt very mercifully with them, for their chains were such as fell off of their own accord: and so do those viperous appellations which he endeavours to fix on the Church, and her practises, calling them Popish, Anti-christian, Idle and Idolized, for thus he bespeaks the Church of Scotland: Oh thou fairest among Women, what hast thou to do with the inveigling appurtenances and habiliments of

Gilguy.

*Preface,
p. 6.*

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of *Babylon the whore &c.* But his Arguments are as impotent as his Obloquy, the naming of which is confutation enough, at least, if the Reader will but turn his negatives into affirmatives, and his affirmatives into negatives, the weakness of the man, and his manner of arguing will be manifest to all.

As First, when he says we are not to account the Ceremonies matters of small importance] contrary to the sense of ours, and all the Reformed Churches which account them things indifferent and not worth the contending for. Secondly, Let not (says he) the pretence of peace and unity cool your fervour, or make you spare to oppose yourselves to those idle and Idolized Ceremonies] contrary to the Text, and to *Rom. 14. 17.* Thirdly, beware also you be not deceived with a pretence of the Churches consent, and of Uniformity, as well with the ancient Church as with the now Reformed Churches in the forms and customs of both] as if the consent of the Ancient Church before Popery, and all the Reformed since, were one of the snares to be avoided.

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avoided. Fourthly, moreover, because the foredeck and hindeck of all our opposites probations, do resolve and rest finally into the authority of a law; therefore we certiorate you with *Calvin*, that *si acquievistis imperio, pessimo laqueo vos induistis*] as if there were no difference between the establishing of iniquity by a Law (of which *Calvin* speaks) and the laws of our Superiors for ----- decency and order. Fifthly, do not reckon it enough to bear within the inclosure of your secret thoughts, a certain dislike of the Ceremonies, and other abuses now set on foot; except by profession and action you evidence the same, and so shew your Faith by your fact: principally prayers and supplications are the weapons of our Spiritual warfare, but as they ought to be done, so the achieving of other secondary means, ought not to be left undone. These are the chief of his arguments, which he sums up in the Epistle dedicated to all and every one in the Reformed Churches of *England, Scotland and Ireland*, and you may judge by these, of the validity of the whole Book which consists

Contrary
to S. Paul,
Ro. 14. 22

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consists of 336. pages, wherein is nothing objected, or asserted, but what hath been abundantly confuted by cogent reasons and arguments. After this Scottish Pipe march many English Reformado's headed by Dr. Owen, whose chief objection is, that the ceremonies are unwritten and unscriptural inventions of Men, and that Christ's warrant and authority must be shewn, for what is imposed in the worship of God. The ridiculousness of this objection hath been clearly demonstrated by the Reverend Bishop Sanderson, and others. Then Mr. Hickman sends forth his Apology, and his Banasus Hapilans, who inveighs against the ceremonies, especially for being significant, and instructeth in the sign of the Cross, which is made a sign of dedication to God, in Token that, &c. Whereas others of his party do oppose them, because they are not significative enough. To him succeeds the Author of the Rehearsal, who says that the Conformists defining a Sacrament to be an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace (Omitting the chief part of the definition [we ordained by

160. 116.
116. 2. 116.
Evangelic
cablewood
p. 116. 116.
116. 116.
116. 116.

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by Christ himself]) do make the cere-
 monies of a Sacramental nature. To
 these the learned *Ritschel* in his *Tract*
de Cereemoniis, gives satisfactory an-
 swers to all unprejudiced Readers, and
*Durel, Parker**, and others have done
 no less. It will be but labour in vain,
 to repeat here all the solid replies to
 those empty objections. One such ar-
 gument from Scripture, as our Savi-
 our urgeth in the Text, against those
 that on pretence of contending for
 their own, against the established rites
 and customs of the Church, do vio-
 late the laws of Obedience, Love, and
 Peace, will silence them all, if they be
 not possessed with a spirit of contradi-
 ction. For if we should suppose that the
 rites and ceremonies were as expressly
 set down in the Gospel to be used, or
 forborn in the publick worship of God,
 as the rites and circumstances concern-
 ing Sacrifices, were in the ceremonial
 law: yet as the Sacrifices themselves,
 much more the modes of preparing
 and offering them, might be used or
 omitted, for the performance of moral
 duties; so doubtless, if things of an ex-
 ternal, ceremonial nature, had been
 com-

* Mr. Cal-
 vin & Mr.
Ritschel
 have done
 the same.
 et. 61.
 p. 90, 454.

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commanded, or forbidden in expresse terms, they might yet be observed, or omitted, as the substantial service of God, and obedience to his greater commands; for charity and peace might be best performed. But these things being not determined particularly by the Gospel, but left under general rules, for decency and order, may doubtless be determined by a lawful authority, such as that of our Church, under our Gracious Sovereign, is, and being so determined and imposed, there is an advantage on the side of Authority, against a scrupulous conscience, which ought to over-rule the practice of such who are members of that Church. It remains only that I endeavour to remove an objection or two against what is here said.

Object. 1. If the ceremonies be things of such indifferency, Why do not they who are in authority, dispense with the use of them, or totally lay them aside for the sake of peace and unity?

Ans. 1. The Magistrate doth but his duty in providing for the solemnity of Divine worship, according to those general rules for decency and order

pre-

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prescribed by the Apostles. 2^{ly}, What the Magistrate doth, is not only agreeable to his private discretion and conscience, (for he practiseth the same things that he prescribes) but according to the deliberate determinations of the most wise and pious persons of the Nation, in their solemn Assemblies, and doubtless (as St. *Ambrose* wrote to St. *Augustine*) if they had known any thing better, they would have practised that. 3^{ly}, It will very much impair the authority and reputation of Magistrates, so to comply with the importune clamours of scrupulous persons, as to alter or abrogate their laws and constitutions, as oft as discontented or seduced persons shall demand it. And though it be very uncertain that the craving party will be satisfied, when they are indulged in all that they desire, yet it is certain that others will be encouraged to make new supplications, and so create perpetual disturbances. And the gratifying of a few weaklings, or malecontents, may give just cause of offence, to a greater and better party, who are desirous to worship God in the beauty of holiness.

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and are really grieved at the irreverence and disorders which are, and have been too observable in the Meetings of dissenting parties. 4th, Hereby the Magistrate should tacitly confess himself guilty of all those accusations that have been charged upon him, and his predecessors, of imposing unlawful, superstitious and *Papish* ceremonies, and persecuting the godly and conscientious people, that could not conform to them. And 5th, It would greatly defame those worthy Martyrs, who not only thought fit to retain them, and gave cogent arguments for the lawful use of them, but sealed the established worship and discipline with their blood, not only in the *Marian* days, but under the late Usurpation also. 6th, It is an unreasonable thing, to demand that, which they themselves would deny, if they were in the Magistrates place; for let me ask them, whether they, being well perswaded of their discipline and order (*viz.* that it is agreeable to the Word of God, to antiquity and reason) would comply with the desires of dissenting parties, to make such alterations, as should from
time

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time to time be required by others, contrary to their own judgments and consciences: and to this we need no other answer, than the practice of the Objectors, when they were in Authority. And who can doubt, but that they, who being subjects, do assume to themselves a power of directing and prescribing to the Magistrate, if they were in the Magistrates place would take it very ill to be directed by their Subjects. 74. If the established ceremonies were removed, others of a like nature would succeed, as unscriptural, and symbolical as they, (such as sitting at the Sacrament, and lifting up the hands to Heaven,) it being impossible almost to perform divine service, with any decency, without such: and seeing that for many centuries of the Primitive Church, wherein other ceremonies have been complained of by Saint *Augustine*, and others, no man ever objected against the ceremonies which are used in our Church, and which were by those famous Reformers and Martyrs retained in our Liturgy, it is no argument of a meek or quiet spirit, to make objections, and cause divisions
upon

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upon pretence of Superstition in the Liturgy and ceremonies, and to expect that the Church, to save their reputation should betray her own, and by abrogating her sanctions, give the world more reason than yet hath been given, to believe, that the Church of *England*, even from the first Reformation, hath been in a dangerous error, and the Factions that opposed her, have had truth and justice on their side.

In the second Objection, Papists and Sectaries joyntly say, That other dissenters may as well justify their separation from us, on pretence of the Ceremonies retained by our Church, as we can justify our separation from the Church of *Rome* by reason of the Ceremonies injoynd by her. To which I shall not need to make any other answer, than a short appeal to the Consciences of all unprejudiced persons, Whether the Church of *England*, requiring the use of three Ceremonies declared by her self to be indifferent, and acknowledged by her enemies not to be unlawful, can be thought by any sober person to give as great, and just a cause of Separation from her, as all
that

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that load of Superstition in the Church of Rome, of which St. Augustine complained in his days, that the Jewish yoke was less heavy. To require Prayers in an unknown Tongue, and to Saints and Angels is doubtless more offensive, than to use a solemn plain form of words, taken either from the Scripture, or the ancient Liturgies of the Church. What is the Surplice, Cords in Baptism, and kneeling at the Sacrament for devotion, if compared to their Adoration of the transubstantiated Host, worshipping of Images, invocation of Saints, their doctrines of the Popes Supremacy, and Infallibility, of Purgatory and Indulgences, besides the innumerable ceremonies daily practised by them? And as the Sectaries will not condemn the Church of England, for receding from these extreams, so neither can the Romanists blame her for want of moderation, in retaining both purity of Doctrine, and decency of Worship, and abhorring those other extreams of Sacrilege and profanation of holy things, of Rebellion and Blood-shed, though under pretence of Religion, where-
with

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with both they and the Sectaries have defiled themselves. It was the pious care of the Pilots of our Church, to conduct their Successors (between the two rocks of Superstition and Idolatry on one hand, and irreverence and irreligion on the other) in the same course in which (I hope we all believe) they themselves went to Heaven. And the Governors of the Church have ever since taken caution of all its Ministers, not to depart from the same, either in their publick ministrations or doctrines, so that the people need not doubt of their security in such good old ways, wherein, as the ancient *Martyrs* did, they may even in the midst of outward troubles, find peace in their Souls. But as for those that give themselves up to the guidance of Unstable men, (who have degenerated not only from the moderation, and charity of the ancient Non-conformists, but even from their own principles, and neither are what they lately were, nor have given their followers any security, that they will continue to be what now they are) They must needs be like children, tossed to and

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fro with every wind of Doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lye in wait to deceive. There are perhaps some weak persons among us, whose Consciences are really offended at the use of our Ceremonies, these we ought to regard so far, that if it were in our power, we should rather omit the use of the Ceremonies, than give them offence. But as we are forbid to give any offence to private persons, so much more to the Church of God, by our disobedience. And whereas those that have real scruples of Conscience will be diligent to enquire, and ready to receive satisfaction, from their more learned Brethren, it cannot be presumed that there are many such among us, who have the arguments and examples of the first Reformers and *Martyrs*, the sense and Harmony of the Reformed Churches abroad, the deliberate constitutions of the Church and State at home, to instruct them in the necessity of Obedience in such indifferent things; and if weak persons will attend rather to the wicked suggestions of a few discontented and turbulent men,

1 Cor. 10.
32.

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men, *Qui obstruunt pectora hominum,*
ut ante nos odisse incipiant, quam nosse,
that so Lord it over the Consciences of
weak persons, as to make them hate
their Brethren, they know not for
what; if they neglect to hear the
Church, and despise instruction, and
choose their own delusions, they are
no longer weak Brethren, but resolved
adversaries, and of such Christ says,

Matth. 15. 14. Let them alone, they
be blind Leaders of the blind. And

See Calv.
Institut.

l. 3. c. 19.
S. 11.

that most dissenters among us are of
this kind, may appear from that ready
conformity, which they practised be-
fore the late Indulgence, and since that
upon the test, which argues, their
revolt to proceed from humor, or in-
terest rather than from Conscience.

And as Mr. Calvin says, If such weak
persons never grow so strong as to
digest inoffensive and slender food, it
is certain they were never well nursed
with Milk. I conclude therefore with
Peter Martyr: We must not always
yield to the weak in things indifferent,
but so long only, until they have been
well instructed, after which, if they
are still scrupulous, their infirmity

S. 13:

Loc. Com.
2. l. 4. c.
32.

The Preface concerning, &c.

Calv. ubi
supra S.
12.

deserves no farther respect, for then
'tis not *Scandalum pusillorum sed Pha-
risæorum*. And the Church hath a
necessity of vindicating her liberty
when by the unjust actions of false
Apostles it is questioned and indanger-
ed in the Consciences of her weak
Children.

MISERI-



MISERICORDIAM VOLO:

OR, THE
 PHARISEES
 LESSON.

Matth. ix. 13.

*But go ye, and learn what that meaneth,
 I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice.*

TO find the genuine sense of these words, it will be convenient to consult the Context, from v. 9. where our Saviour calls *Matthew*, a Publican of no small reputation and wealth, to follow him who had not a house where to rest his head. A strange effect (by virtue of two words) wrought on

K 3

such

such a Subject; of which we are obliged to say something, *Ne arreptitiam & enthysiasticam conversionem expectemus*, (saith *Janſenius in Locum*) lest we also should expect (what too many pretend unto) an instantaneous and impulsive power to work irresistibly upon us for our Conversion. *Julian* and *Porphry* do both object this very instance, to overthrow the credit of the Gospel, as if the whole History of it were fictitious and false, or at least to prove that they were no other than giddy and fanatick persons, that followed our Saviour: Of this *S. Hierome* takes notice, and answers thus, *Fulgor ipse & Majestas Divinitatis occulta, quæ etiam in humanâ facie relucebat, ex primo ad se videntes trahere poterat aspectu. Si enim in magnete, &c.*

In Locum.

But this reply is not thought sufficient by learned Men, to silence the objection, to which it is answered more satisfactorily, as followeth. That *S. Matthew* was brought up in the Jewish Religion, wherein that he was a good proficient, appears, as from many passages in that Gospel, so especially by the Hebrew Tongue, wherein he wrote it. In his time the coming of the *Messias* was generally expected by that Nation, and our Saviour having entred on his publick Office, proclaims himself to be that *Messias*, and proves it, not only by the Divine Doctrine which he taught, but by the Miracles wrought by him, such as no other Man did. One was newly effected on the Paralytick Man, v. 2d. whose bodily Dis-

ease

case being cured by two words, *Arise, and walk*, was applyed by our Saviour to perswade the People, that he could as easily and graciously pardon their sins. Now St. *Matthem* living in *Caper-naum* where this was done, could not be ignorant of the fact, nor can we probably suppose him negligent, to certifie himself of the real truth of that and other Miracles, which our Saviour wrought in *Caper-naum*; and comparing the predictions of the Prophets, (with which he was well acquainted) with the several circumstances of the time and place, and the mighty deeds of the promised *Messias*, he was perswaded to believe him to be the *Christ*; of which (it is also probable that) our Saviour more fully convinced him by some particular arguments, besides the general Doctrine which he taught in that City, although only the close of that Discourse be recorded; so that he was not converted as St. *Paul* was, by a Miracle from Heaven, but by the ordinary rational method, by which it pleaseth God to draw other sinners to himself, *Opening their eyes, and turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* It is no

Acts 26. 18

* Thus we find that

Xenophon

became the Disciple of *Socrates*, for meeting him in a narrow passage, *Xenophon* asked him this short question, Πῶς παρασκευάζονται τῶν ἀναγκασιωδῶν ἕκαστον; (i.) How the necessaries of life might be obtained? to which having answered satisfactorily, he demanded again, Πῶς δὲ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἡννομεῖται ἀνθρώπων; (i.) Where Men might be made good and virtuous? *Socrates* answered, Ἐνταῦθα μάθετε, (i.) Come and learn, whereupon *Xenophon* followed him, and became his Disciple. *Diog. Laertius in vitâ Xenophont.*

Matthew follows such an effectual call, and without farther consultation with flesh and blood, leaves all and follows his Saviour. We say not then that our Conversion is the work of an instant, nor that it comes with such observation, that we can ordinarily point at the time and place, and say, *Lo here, or loe there* it was; the work is done gradually, and not in a moment, rationally and not violently, in a soft calm voice, and not in a Whirlwind, that carries us irresistibly, and in a manner unaccountable, to an estate of grace. Whatever impulses some Men may have on their spirits, to believe themselves thus sanctified, they will find at last that God was not in that Wind, for although it be violent, it is not long, and though it might shake the heart, yet it doth not sweep it, it is a work of time and Christian circumspection, to *make our calling and election sure*. *St. Matthew* having found the *Messias*, and become his Disciple, partly in gratitude to his Saviour, and partly in charity to his neighbours, that they might partake of the same grace with himself, invites them to his House, where, as *St. Mark* says, Ch. 2. 15. *As Jesus sate at meat, many publicans and sinners sate also with Jesus, and his Disciples.* The *Pharisees* observing our Saviour too familiar (as they thought) with Publicans and sinners, insinuate this objection to his Disciples, *Why eateth your Master with Publicans and Sinners?* v. 11. To this our Saviour replyeth by a three-fold Argument; The first of Reason,

Reason, in a proverbial speech, *The whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick*: The 2d. from Scripture, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*: The 3d. from the end of his coming, which was, *not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to repentance*. The Text is the second of these Arguments, and I cannot omit a short remark upon our Saviour's Preface; for, whereas he conversed in a familiar manner with the Publicans and Sinners, he turns off the Pharisees, who pretended to more knowledge and piety than others, with an imputation of Ignorance, and Uncharitableness, *face-site*, Get you home, and study your own duty to God, and your neighbours, and trouble not your selves or others about such niceries of the Law. Go learn what that meaneth, &c. By Mercy we are to understand, *Quicquid humanitatis fratri debemus*, all those offices of Humanity, or Christianity, which we owe to our selves or Brethren, whether in respect of their Souls, or Bodies, goods, or good names; and by Sacrifice (which being the chief part of God's publick Worship among the *Jews*, is put for the whole) *Totum externum cultum*, all the Pedagogy of the *Jewish* Discipline, of which only the Pharisees were zealous, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith: And now I shall need onely to intreat you to read over the whole Verse in *Hosea* 6. 6. from whence the Text is taken, for a full exposition of it, where it is thus written, *I desired mercy, and not sacrifice,*

sacrifice, and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings; the latter part whereof, being exegetical of the former gives us this sense, *I desired mercy, more than sacrifice*, for the Hebrews wanting the termes of comparison, do use the negative, **אין** and **לא** or the preposition **בלי** which signifieth *præ*, as in *Proverbs* 8. 10. *I desired instruction, אֶל־כֶּסֶף and not silver; and knowledge מִהָרָץ rather than fine gold*: where the negative is not exclusive, but comparative, for when two things come into comparison, it is usual with the Hebrews, to deny of that which is less, and to affirm of that which is more excellent. And this may help us to understand many places of Scripture, which without this knowledge of the Hebrew Idiom, seem very difficult, as *Jeremy* 7. 22. *I spake not to your Fathers concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my People*, which cannot be understood, as if God had not commanded them concerning Sacrifices, but that he did not require them chiefly, or principally; Obedience being the duty which was most aimed at: So in the New Testament, *John* 7. 16. *My Doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me*: So St. Paul says, *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel*; and *Rom.* 9. 16. *It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy*, where our endeavours are not excluded, but the grace of God preferred. Sacrifice then,

1 Cor. 1. 17.

then, as if imports the publick worship of God, is not excluded. God that made our Souls and Bodies, requires that we should glorifie him in our Souls and in our Bodies which are his, and that we may serve him acceptably, he requireth outward reverence, as well as inward fear; and therefore to forsake the assembling of our selves, or in our Assemblies not to use that solemn Unity and reverence which may manifest our awful apprehensions of that great Majesty, with whom we have to do, and which may add a beauty to holiness, is a gloss besides this Text, as if God had said, *Sacrificium nolo*, I care not whether ye worship me publickly or no, whether it be at *Jerusalem*, or on mount *Gerizim*, whether ye keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuary, whether ye agree in those things which ye shall ask, or pray *pro* and *con*, or whether ye pray sitting or standing by your selves apart, as the *Pharisee* did; as if God were indeed the Author of confusion, and not of Peace and Order.

Secondly, When God says *Misericordiam nolo*, He doth not exclude Justice, for though his tender Mercy be over all his works, yet the Judge of all the earth will do right. Mercy and Judgment were the two great strings that sounded so harmoniously in *Dauids* Harp, *Psal.* 101. 1. God requireth of us, first to do justice, and then to love mercy, *Micab* 6. 8. If private persons may defend their just rights, without violation of the rules of Charity, much

1 Cor. 6.

20.

Heb. 12.

28.

1 Cor. 14.

33.

much more may such as are publick persons, who may not shew mercy, but with a *Salvo* to the publick peace and truth. By the Laws of God and man we are to give the precedence to acts of Justice, before the works of Mercy. He doth not hate his flesh, that suffers a gangreen'd member to be cut off, *I wish they were even cut off that trouble you*, says the meekest Apostle. When particular offenders grow obstinate, and incorrigible, it is an act of Mercy to make them a Sacrifice to the publick justice. If the offence be not capital, his punishment may be a means to reclaim him; if it be, the example of his sufferings may deter others from the like sins, when *they shall hear, and fear and do no more so wickedly*; and so it may prove a means of preventing the judgments of God from falling down upon the Land. God himself will not be merciful to them that offend of malicious wickedness, though he have said *Misericordiam volo*, I will have mercy, &c. Which words commend unto us this seasonable and necessary instruction, that

Gal 5. 12.

Deutr. 13.
11.

Psal 59. 5.

Doctr.

To be busie and scrupulous about the external worship of God, to the neglect of moral duties to God and our Brethren, is a *Pharisaical* temper, contrary to the Will of God.

For the proof of which position, I shall weigh Mercy and Sacrifice in the ballance of the Sanctuary, that you may clearly see of what different esteems they are in the sight of God.

God. And first, of Sacrifice, whose Antiquity might justly gain a great veneration among that people; for though I do not think it as ancient, as the state of Innocency, (as *Bel-larmine* and *Greg. de Valentia* (the better to countenance their Sacrifice of the Mass) do affirm, *Bellar. de missâ l. 1. c. 20. Valent. de missæ Sacrif. l. 1. c. 4.)* yet it is almost as old as *Adam*, who taught his Sons to offer both of the fruits of the earth, and the fatlings of the Flock, which was done, as some learned men affirm, immediately upon that Covenant made to the promised seed, which was solemnized by Sacrifices, as the Apostle intimates, *Hebr. 9. 18. & 22.* And the Skins wherewith we find *Adam* and *Eve* clothed, shortly after the fall, and which were afterward made the Priests portion, *Levit. 8. 8.* were given them by God, (he having first had the flesh in Sacrifice) to be *Symbolum propitiationis* a sign of that Propitiation by which their sins were covered.

Secondly, Sacrifices were of greater esteem for their Institution, than their Antiquity, God himself having commanded the several sorts of them, and the particular circumstances concerning them. As first the Peace-offering, for the fruits of the earth. Secondly, the Sin-offering, for Atonement and pardon of Transgressions. Thirdly, the Burnt-offering, as an acknowledgment of Homage to God the Sovereign Lord of all. The book of *Leviticus* is but a Directory for these.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, They were very considerable for their usefulness. First, as they were to be *Signa innocentie*, testimonies and declarations of Innocency. For as the creatures offered unto God ought to be only such as were clean for their kind, so particularly they ought to be without spot or blemish; and no beasts or birds of prey, but the Ox and the Lamb, the Turtle and the Dove, harmless and useful creatures only, must be brought to the Altar, and the offerer was to lay his hands on the beast, either to profess his innocence, that he was not guilty of bribes or of blood, of fraud or violence, or if he were, then to confess his sins, and deprecate the wrath of God by virtue of that Covenant, whereof the Sacrifice was a testimony, and so it was propitiatory. They were, Secondly, Eucharistical pledges, and earnest of their gratitude, expressing their readiness to forgoe all, or to return it to him from whom they received it. Thirdly, they were Admonitions to the guilty persons, to repent of their sins, or else that they must perish as those beasts did.

Fourthly, By external Sacrifices they were minded of their internal duties, as *maclare propriam voluntatem*, to mortifie all beastly lusts and affections.

Fifthly, They were fences and boundaries to the Religion, God commanding the *Jews* to Sacrifice those very beasts which their Idolatrous neighbours did worship (as the Ox, the Sheep, and Dove, which were worshipped

as Gods, among the *Egyptians* and *Zabii*) to maintain a greater detestation of Idolatry in their hearts.

Sixthly, They were as so many penalties, and forfeitures, taken on that people upon every trespass, which also served, not only as a present punishment, but a future terror, minding them that they had forfeited their own lives and Souls, which God was pleased to spare, expecting better obedience, even a living Sacrifice.

And yet all this notwithstanding, though Sacrifices were venerable for their Antiquity, more for their usefulness, as well to the Religion in general, as to the Reformation of particular persons, but most of all, for its divine Institution, the *Levitical Law* being but a Rubrick or directory for the Sacrifices, *Misericordiam volo, &c. I will have mercy.*

For if hypocritical *Jews* should have amassed all these Sacrifices in one, as the Prophet *Ier. 7. 21.* speaks, *Put your burnt-offerings to your Sacrifices and eat flesh*; If they should go with their Flocks, and herds to seek the Lord, *Hos. 5. 6.* If they should have presented a Sacrifice as magnificent as that of *Solomon*, 22000 Oxen, and 120000 Sheep; If they should have invented more costly ones, thousands of Rams, and ten thousand rivers of Oil, their first-born for their transgression, the fruit of their bodies, for the sin of their Souls; yet to do justice, and to love mercy, is preferred to them all, *Mic. 6. 8.*

¹ Kings
8. 63.

For

ver. 19,
20.

For though Sacrifices were, commanded, yet not for any intrinsical goodness in them, but with respect to some greater good: *Eze. 20. 25. I gave them Statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live, they were not originally good, as the duties of the Moral Law, these were commanded because they were good, the other good only because they were commanded, they did not make the Offerer, but he made them acceptable, as in the case of Cain and Abel. Thus God speaks to wicked men, Psal. 50. that gave their mouths to evil, and did sit and speak against their Brother and slander their own mothers son, I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or burnt-offerings, Offer to God Thanksgiving, &c. And Psal. 51. 16. Thou desirest not Sacrifice, else would I give it thee. The Sacrifices of God, are a broken Spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Solomon tells us [after that he had presented that costly Sacrifice] To do justice and judgment, is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice, Prov. 21. 3. for it is true of the house of God, what he says of ours, Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of Sacrifices with strife, Prov. 17. 1. In this therefore, the young Scribe was better instructed than these Pharisees, for he consented with our Saviour, Mark 12. 33. That to love the Lord, with all our heart, &c. and our neighbours as our selves, is more than all whole burnt-offerings, and Sacrifice. In a word, our Savi-*

Saviour hath told us, that whatever our gift be that we bring to the Altar, if we remember, that our Brother hath ought against us, (i.) if we are conscious of any injury, or unkindness, wherewith he may charge us, it is our duty to go first, and be reconciled to our Brother, before we presume to offer our gift, though it be of prayer, or praise; God will never accept of a peace-offering, from them that live in enmity with their Brethren.

And now if I should put into this scale, the whole Oeconomy of the Jewish discipline, their Oblations and Incense, their New Moons and Sabbaths, their calling of Assemblies (for Feasts or Fasts,) and their Prayers too, as *Isai. i. 11.* they would for want of mercy be found too light. *To what purpose are they?* saith God, *v. 11. Who hath required this at your hands?* *v. 12. Bring no more vain Oblations, incense is an abomination to me, I cannot away with it, it is iniquity even your solemn meetings,* *ver. 13.* they were esteemed but mock services by God, for want of mercy to their Brethren.

Two other instances I shall add, because they seem of great weight.

First, That of Circumcision, which is called Gods Covenant with *Abraham*, by which he promised to be his God and the God of his seed, *Gen. 17. 10.* and the Apostle calls it a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, *Rom. 4. 11.* And as God instituted it, so he commanded the observation of it by a severe Sanction. *The Uncircumcised was to be cut off, Gen. 17. 14.*

And the Rabbies tell us, that as God appointed destroying Angels to that end, so he assigned guardian Angels to every one that was Circumcised. Certain it is, that they bearing the marks and tokens of Gods Covenant in their flesh, did boast themselves to be Gods peculiar people. And as our Apostle intimates, they preferred it to the Cross of Christ which the Apostle, though he himself was Circumcised, abhors with an *abſit*, *Gal. 6. ver. 14.* But it was a saying among the *Jews*, that Circumcision was equal to the keeping of the whole Law, and that Heaven & Earth could not stand if Circumcision were omitted, therefore they made the eight days before Circumcision to be a preparation for that solemnity at which they invited their friends as witnesses and Sponsors for the child, that he should observe the Statutes of the God of *Israel*, and in the later times, had always an empty Chair set for *Elias*, expecting that he should descend from Heaven to be a witness of the Circumcision; and yet in truth it was as the Apostle saith, a burthen which neither they nor their Fathers could bear, and therefore God himself dispensed with the use of it to this people forty years together in the wilderness; and though *St. Paul* was Circumcised, and to make his own and *Timothy's* ministry the more acceptable to that people, took *Timothy* and Circumcised him, yet he teacheth them that if they were Circumcised (i. e.) with an intention to obtain Salvation by the works of the Law, Christ should profit

Acts 15.
10.

Acts 16. 1.

profit them nothing : And *Galatians 6. 15.* (to them that were) in *Christ Jesus*, neither *circumcision* availed any thing, neither *uncircumcision*, but a new creature ; by which he understands, *Gal. 5. 6.* *faith which worketh by love* : And in the *1 Cor. 7. 19.* a keeping the *Commandments of God* : so that *circumcision* was not to be contended for, when the propagation of the Gospel, or Charity came into competition with it.

A second instance shall be that of the *Jewish Sabbath*, of the profanation whereof the *Pharisees* complained to Christ of his Disciples, *Matth. 12. 2.* and for whose vindication our Saviour urgeth again the right understanding of this Text, *v. 7.* *If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.* Many of Christ's Disciples (as well as himself) were circumcised, and so obliged to sanctifie the Sabbath according to the Commandment, and great were the punishments which God threatened and inflicted on the transgressors, such as struck a terror to them, which made them run into superstition, insomuch that they would not go out of their places; nor dress their meat, nor carry a stick, nor defend themselves against their enemies on that day. And the crime for which the Disciples were complained of, was rather for transgressing their tradition, than any precept of God ; for if the fault was their walking through the Corn-fields, it doth not appear that they exceeded

2000. Cubits, which was allowed by them for a Sabbath-days Journey; if plucking the ears of Corn, that was approved by the Law, *Deut.* 23. 25. If for eating (which seemeth most probable, because our Saviour answered the objection by the instance of *David's* eating the shew-bread) yet being hungry, their necessity might excuse them, nor was this forbidden (though perhaps contrary to a superstitious practice of theirs, for which the Heathen upbraided them, (*i. e.*) their Sabbath-days Fasts) therefore Christ vindicates them, as guiltless upon the plea in the Text, *I will have mercy, &c.* As if he had said, You Pharisees do not understand the substantial and spiritual part of your own Law, for as long as there is not contumacy or contempt in the neglect of Ceremonial Precepts, but the excuse of a just necessity, or the rational consideration of a greater good to out-weigh that neglect, God will not impute it as a sin. Of this our Saviour convinceth them by the instance of *David*, *v. 4.* and of the Priests in the Temple, profaning the Sabbath by dressing the Sacrifices, for they were wont to say--- *In the Temple there is no Sabbath.* If then the service of the Temple excused the Priests for profaning the Sabbath; the service of Christ who tells them of himself, that he was greater than the Temple, *v. 6.* might excuse his Disciples, who being Prophets and Preachers of the Kingdom of Heaven, were greater than the Priests of the Law, as our Saviour said of *John* the Baptist, *Matth.* 11. 11. Now

Now a Prophet even under the Law, was above the Law of the Temple, and might sacrifice in any place, as *Elias* did, and therefore it could not be unlawful for Christ's Disciples, so earnestly attending his work, that they became hungry, having no other provision, to eat a few grains of Corn for their present relief. Again, our Saviour tells them, *v. 8.* that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, which that he speaks of himself as the *Messias* (who had power to abrogate and alter the Sabbath) is the opinion of some, though not so clear, because *Matth. 16. 20.* he would not have it yet known that he was the *Messias*, and if our Saviour had made this his argument he needed not to have used any other. Others therefore think that by the Son of Man is meant *every Son of Man*, for Christ himself was not blamed but his Disciples, whom he pronounceth guiltless for this reason, *The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath*, which *S. Mark* expresseth more plainly to this purpose, *Mark 2. 27. The Sabbath was made for man*: and so the argument stands thus, That which was made for another thing is to give place to that for which it was made, but *the Sabbath was made for man, ergo, &c.* Now though the *Jews* were so superstitious, that even in the time of the *Maccabees*, they would not defend themselves against their enemies on the Sabbath-day, yet shortly after they began to grow wiser, and would not only defend their own Lives, but assault their enemies, and do any

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necessary

necessary work; for they had dearly been taught this Maxime, *Periculum vita dissolvit Sabbatum*, that the danger of losing Life did dissolve the Sabbath: And as *Selden, de Jure Gentium*, l. 2. c. 10. they held that in case of sickness, a Jew might not only eat forbidden Meats, but for recovery of health, or avoidance of any great danger, he might break any commandment, except these three, (*viz.*) Idolatry, Murther, and Incest; and I have heard from the mouth of a modern Jew, an odd interpretation of that Text, *Pro. 4. 4.* which he interpreting the copulative, by a discriptive, reads, *Keep the commandments, but live*; i. e. so keep the commandments, as to be careful of preserving thy life in keeping of them. But to return in our Saviour's time, it was practised by them, as a thing lawful on the Sabbath-day, to pluck an Oxe or an Ass out of a Ditch, or to lead them to Water, and to permit Merchants and Carriers to travel about their necessary affairs on that Day. So that the sum of all is this, that when two Laws seemed to interfere, so as both could not be kept, the lesser must yield to the greater, the ritual and ceremonial, to the moral or evangelical, which is the sense of the Text: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*

Luk. 13. 15

But it may be objected, What is this of the contention of the Jews for Ceremonies, to the contending of Christians against them, when they are imposed contrary to their Christian liberty?

Ans.

Ans. These Objectors do no more understand their Christian liberty, than the Pharisees did the right meaning of the Text, which equally concludes against them that contend against Ceremonies, as them that contend for them, to the breach of Charity, Obedience, and Publick Peace, which as I have already proved against the *Jews* out of their Law, so I shall prove it (*contra Gentes*) against contentious Christians out of the Gospel. — Christian liberty is the restoring of Mankind by Christ to such an estate as it was in, before the Ceremonial Law was imposed, so that now every Creature of God is good, 1 Tim. 4. 4. nothing is of it self unclean, Titus 1. 15. but all things are lawful, 1 Cor. 6. 11. (i. e.) it is lawful for a Christian to do those things, against which nothing of moment can be alledged from the Scriptures, or right reason, to prove them unlawful. Those Men therefore go the wrong way, and puzzle their own and other Mens consciences, who argue, It is not commanded, therefore I may not do it; whereas they ought to argue, It is not forbidden, therefore I may do it without prejudice to my Christian liberty: although it may be truly said, that it is commanded of God (*in genere*) from 1 Cor. 14. 40. and (*in specie*) by authority, to which we are bound to yield obedience for conscience sake, not as if the commands of our Superiors did immediately bind the conscience in such cases, but by virtue of God's commands for obedience to the higher

powers. The truth of all this will appear, from the Apostles own practice, *Acts 15. 28.* who imposed on the Primitive Christians such things, as were in their nature indifferent, to be observed as necessary, *bono pacis*, so *Piscator*, *Non semper & ubiqz, nec per se & simpliciter ad salutem necessaria, sed ad pacem Ecclesia & vitandas offensiones, ut aleretur mutua benevolentia inter Iudaeos & Gentiles*: The sense whereof I shall give you from the *English Annotations* on the place, The word necessary is not referred to the Ceremonies, but the present occasion, and persons whose Salvation and Unity was necessary. Now who dares say, they were not bound to observe those Canons, when the Apostles say, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, as well as to them, to lay these things upon them, as necessary to be observed for the time and ends above mentioned?

Again, we find *St. Paul* commending the *Corinthians*, 1 Epistle, Ch. 11. v. 2. for keeping the Ordinances which he delivered them, that is, say our Annotators, particular Ordinances for comeliness and good order, which belonged to Ecclesiastical Polity, and were afterward called Canons, against which, if any but only seemed to be contentious by disputing against them, the Apostle silenced them by that, in *Vers. 16.* *We have no such custome, neither the Churches of God*, that is, say the same Annotators, to contend about matters of this nature; but willingly and cheerfully to obey those that have the over-sight of us in the Lord. And

it is fit to consider the nature of the matter treated of, which was, how Men and Women ought to behave themselves at publick Prayers, which behaviour the Apostle would have to agree with those signs and gestures of reverence, which Subjects are wont to yield to their Princes: and although the *Jews* worshipped with their Heads covered, which was esteemed a sign of reverence among them, as also do the *Turks* to this day sit covered, and bowing their Bodies at their Devotions, as they are wont to do in the presence of their Rulers; yet the Apostle being to plant the Church among the *Romans*, and *Grecians*, with whom the uncovering of the Head was a token of reverence, he appoints the same behaviour in the Worship of God. And this was practised by the Christians in *Tertullian's* days, who prayed *Capite nudo, expansis manibus*, with bare Heads, and Hands lifted up, and this *Tertullian* calls *legem Dei*, God's Law, *Quærit legem Dei? habet communem istam in publico mundi & in naturalibus tabulis ad quas & Apostolus provocare solet cum in velamine faciei, inquit, Non natura vos docet?* For by Nature here, as *Grotius* observes, such general customs as had obtained among the *Gentiles* are intended, *Non est hoc plane Naturale, sed quod longe lateq; receptum, ut Jurisconsulti dant nomen Juris Naturalis, Juri Gentium.* Our Apostle then in this place doth, as with a two-edged Sword, cut off all disputations, contentions, against decent Ceremonies in the Worship

*Cameron
in loc.*

Apologes.

*Grotius in
loc.*

ship of God, 1. By his Apostolical injunction. 2ly, By the custome of the Churches of God : and to contend about such things, and disturb the peace of the Church is as unreasonable, as irreligious a thing, which is my second argument, The unreasonableness of contending for Ceremonies, to the neglect of Moral duties.

1. For it agrees with the sentiments of Mankind, as *Plato* discovers them, ἡ θεὸς τὰ δῶρα καὶ θυσιῶν ἀποχρίνεται ἡμῶν οἱ θεοὶ. ἀλλὰ τὰς ψυχὰς, ἃν τις ὅποιος, καὶ δίκαιος προσχέειν ὦν. *The Gods respect not our Sacrifices, but our Souls : And we our selves acknowledge not them for our Friends, or Servants, who only complement us, or put us off with eye-service, or a little lip-labour, Quin demus Superis — Compositum fuit, fasq; animi, sanctosq; recessus — Mentis ; & incoctum Generoso pectus honesto : Hac cedo ut admoveam templis, & farre litabo.*

2. Because the works of Mercy are Μιμήματα τῆς θείας ζωῆς, the resemblances of the Divine nature, and life : *Be ye merciful, saith our Saviour, Luke 6. 36. as your Heavenly Father is merciful. Lactantius* tells us, *Summa Religionis est enim imitari quem colis*, it is the perfection of Religion, to be like him, whom we worship. Now God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1 Joh. 4. 16. And he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath seen, how can he, (i. e.) he cannot, love his God whom he hath not

In Divinitate nil divinius, in humanitate nil humanius.

not seen, 1 Joh. 4. 20. God hath made our charity, and our peace, as well as our holiness, Heb. 12. 14 conditions, without which we shall not see God: The Prophet *Hosea*, to instruct us in the mercifulness of God, commends to us the knowledge of God; did we know God better, we would love our Brethren more; 1 Joh. 4. 8. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.* It is spoken of *Josiah*, that he judged the cause of the poor and needy, was not this to know me, saith the Lord? Jer. 22. 16.

c. 6. 6.

Hæu! prima scelerum causa mortalibus agris Naturam nescire Deum. Sil. Ital.

We are mostly prepossess'd with unreasonable and uncharitable Opinions, and passions, which do not only dispose us to think amiss of our Brethren, but of God also, as if he were such as our selves, as the *Indians* being black, paint their Gods so too. That Man must needs be very unmerciful, that can think his God to be so, and sure it is, that if God should be as unmerciful towards others, as we fancy him, or as we are, there are but few that would be saved, except those of the same fraternity with our selves. But such black thoughts are fruits of the spirit of Darkness; the fruits of the best spirit, are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, &c. I shall ever suspect that Religion, that teacheth Men to love God, and hate their Brethren with all their heart.

See Jer. 9.
24.

Jain. 3. 15.

Gal. 5. 22.

It is no wonder if the Stoicks, that deny the Deity,

Gal. 6. 2.

II. 55. 8.

Deity, and ascribe all to an inexorable fate, do also unman Humanity, and unbowel Virtue, teaching that a wise Man ought to cast away all compassion, and making that a defect of the Soul, viz. bearing one anothers burthens, which a better Philosopher says; is to fulfill the Law of Christ. Well might Cicero reject them; (*neque enim audiendi sunt, qui virtutem duram, & ferream esse volunt*) as not fit to be heard, who would transform Virtue, which is of a gentle, tender, tractable, and yielding quality, into a rigid, stupid, implacable, and unsociable constitution: Such wise Men have as little brains, as bowels, seeing St. James tells us, that the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisie. And thus, though I have but casually let fall some drops of Mercy into the other scale, you may perceive how much they do outweigh the whole Jewish Discipline and Sacrifices. The treasures of Mercy are as boundless as the Ocean, and therefore I shall not attempt to contract them within this scale. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways; for as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts, saith the Lord.* What great things the mercy of God will effect for such as love him, may partly appear by the things he works in them, and by them, whom he causeth to partake of his
own

own spirit, and so sheds abroad his love into their hearts, that they can extend it again throughout the whole World, and be merciful, *as their Heavenly Father is merciful*, even in that great instance of making (as instruments) *the sun of righteousness to shine, and the Dew of Heaven to fall upon the just and the unjust*, and by their compassionate desires, and faithful prayers, their tender mercies are over all the works of God. How gladly could I cast my self into this Ocean, as *Aristotle to Euripus*, and say, *Quoniam ego non Comprehendam te, tu Comprehendes me*; because I cannot comprehend thy mercies, Lord, let me be comprehended of them!

But as every dust of Gold is Gold, so every act of mercy is precious, and therefore I shall not need to mention the infinite perfections of Divine mercy, nor those Heroick deeds of merciful Men, whose love hath been more strong than Death; but confine my self within those ordinary bounds of Charity, wherein every Christian may and ought to converse with other, such as the Apostle names, *1 Cor. 13. 4.* To be long-suffering, and kind, not to envy, or vaunt themselves, not to be puffed up, and seek their own, not to be easily provoked, nor to think or speak evil: any of these defects will, as the want of Salt to the Sacrifice, make it corrupt, and become unsavory. Every malicious thought will be as so much fire, to make them evaporate into smoke. So the Apostle assures us, *Though I spake with the*

1 Cor. 13.

the tongue of men and Angels, though I had the gift of Prophecie, and understand all Mysteries, and knowledge, and had all Faith, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing. The bare omission of the meanest acts of Charity, such as our Saviour mentioneth, *Matthew 25. 25.* is sufficient to exclude our Souls as well as our Services from Heaven. The Pharisees then, had little reason to insist so exactly on a *Levitical* Ceremony of touching and accompanying with unclean persons; when they admitted that pride and contempt of their brethren, that envy against Christ, which rendred them by far the more unclean. A principle which hath much troubled the Church of God in all ages, when *Pharisaical* men, first censure and condemn their Brethren, and then separate from them, and grow in hatred against them; when they have no other reason to think ill of their Brethren, but because they think too well of themselves; and by their zeal for the externals of Religion, seek to palliate their neglect of the most essential duties. To these our Saviour commends the Lesson in the Text (as well as to those ancient *Pharisees*) *Go learn what that meaneth, &c.*

Having endeavoured to convince your understanding of the truth of the proposition in general, I shall apply it as effectually as I can for the cure of our present distempers; for we also do trouble our selves, and others, about many inconsiderable circumstances of external

nal Worship, to the neglect of those moral duties of Humility, Charity and peace, which are of the very Essence of Religion. And I doubt not but if we would lay aside our pride, prejudice, and carnal interest, and as new-born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we might grow thereby, this plain Lesson of our Saviour, touching the *Love of Mercy*, would more edifie us as well in holiness, as in peace and love, than all the publick declamations or private insinuations of contentious persons, whose zeal (like the little impotent hear in Insects, which not being sufficient to form sound vitals within, runs out into many weak and useless members and produceth (an *Ephemeron*) an Animal that endureth but for a day) running out into many nice circumstances, may have something of the shew, but very little of the substance and life of Religion. To such I do in the fear of God propose this method of learning the Lesson in the Text.

First, That our Agreement in the Substantials of Religion, and the liberty to profess and practise all things necessary to Godliness and Salvation, ought to be an indissoluble bond of peace and unity to us all. As the lower Sphears, though they have a proper tendency of their own, yet yield to the motion of the higher Orb; so though we have some fond conceits, and small concerns of our own, we should forsake them to comply with the great ends of Religion, Mercy, and Peace.

We

We agree in the substance of the Gospel, in the Creed, and Commandments, in the Ministry, and the Sacraments; we are built on the Foundation of the Prophets, and Apostles, *Eph. 2. 20.* Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone, and on this Foundation we may build as high as Heaven, why should our Pride and Contention pull down the Judgment of *Babel* upon us? Methinks there should be no place left for discord among Brethren that are united by so many Obligations, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God, one Father of all: but though we all pretend to meet in the same Center, yet the Leaders in every Faction (as the Lines that are protracted to the greatest length) are farthest from reconciliation.

Eph. 4. 5. Though others murmur and will not be content with *Manna* except they may have their flesh-pots too, Let us bless God, that he hath established truth and righteousness among us by a Law. He hath not dealt so with other Nations, nor was it so with us of late days, and we may justly fear that our ingratitude and contentions may reduce us to the like confusion.

Pf. 127. 20. Secondly, If God himself will dispense with all the externals of his Worship, to shew us mercy, we need not fear his displeasure, if we either omit some things that please us, or admit some other things that displease us in the outward administrations, for the freer exercise of mercy and peace: better it is to submit to a doubtful inconvenience, than to run into

into a certain mischief. And it will never be accounted among our infirmities, that we were not more careful of the publick Worship of God, than he himself.

Thirdly, Neither the external circumstances of Worship which are enjoyned, nor those which are contended for, in opposition to them, have any positive command from God, or our Saviour; for our Saviour hath not prescribed the circumstances of Divine Worship; foreseeing (as Mr. Calvin says) that the same Rites would not agree with the several Nations, and Ages, wherein the Church should be planted; and if we consider that whereas the Two Sacraments only are positively instituted in the New Testament, there have been so great controversies moved about them, that many large Volumes have been written, and many bloody Battles fought by men of contrary minds, it will appear a great mercy, that other things did not come under precept; for then, greater pretences for maintaining differences would have been pleaded, which now have no colour, for as much as the matters in dispute fall not under any command; and if there be no command, it follows that they are left at liberty, but by offending against plain Commands, for obedience and peace, our sin and condemnation are the greater.

*Instit. l. 4.
c. 10. n. 30.*

Fourthly, This shall be a Fourth consideration, that whatever cannot be referred to Faith or good manners, and is neither commanded,

manded nor forbidden, that may be done or omitted, as is most conducive to the great ends of peace, Charity, and Unity. To evince the indifference of an action, these things are sufficient, First, that there be no command injoyning or forbidding it. 2^{ly}. That it be declared by the Magistrate imposing it, that it is not intended as a part of Divine Worship, as having an antecedent necessity, (and so becomes an indispensable duty,) but for Order, Decency and Unity, and therefore as the Casuists say, *extra contemptum & scandalum*, if the Superiors authority be not despised, nor our Brethren scandalized, the practice of such things may be omitted, as you know the Ceremonies may be, in case of necessity, and in private duties, which could not be if they were not things indifferent. So that, that part of the Churches declaration, that says, she hath power to add, alter, or abrogate such Rites, manifestly declares their indifference, as Calvin also affirms, speaking of the Sacramental Bread, whether it be Leavened or unleavened, and the Wine, whether Red or White, whether delivered into every mans hand by the Deacon, or not. *Hec indifferentia sunt & in Ecclesia libertate posita.* The Institutions and practice of the Church are a sufficient rule for such practices. The not prescribing them in Scripture, argueth that it was as unnecessary as impossible to be done: for as to that rule of the Apostle, that *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, it imports not, that we either should have

have a command for every action in the Word of God, or that the thing done, is in it self pleasing to God, but, if it be not forbidden, nor really evil, but is in order to other good ends, it may or may not be done, (without a Superstitious fear of offending God,) by virtue of our Christian liberty.

Fifthly, In all things not determined by the Word of God, we are bound to obey the Magistrate, by virtue of the general Commands of God, and otherwise the Magistrate should have no authority at all, for those things which are good in their own nature, are commanded by God, and therefore the Magistrate must have power in things not commanded, or he hath none at all: and so in things forbidden, which will more plainly appear by what followeth,

Rom. 13

For, Sixthly, If I may do, or not do things in their nature indifferent, rather than offend a weak Brother, (which is the Nonconformists Plea to the Conformists) much more ought I so to do, or not do, rather than offend a Christian Magistrate, or disturb the publick peace, because publick offences are more carefully to be avoided than private, and when the Magistrates command is added (whether he be Civil or Ecclesiastical) that which was but lawful before, becomes, *pro hic & nunc*, necessary, as a means to peace or edification, *Acts* 15. 20. It is certainly more sinful, to oppose the command of many wise men (and such perhaps as are intrusted by us) or which is the same thing to go against their

judgment, and offend their Consciences, than to go against the judgment, and offend the Consciences of a few weak Brethren, who neither have the advantages to inform themselves of the nature of things, nor that authority, or concern, to provide for the publick peace, as their Superiours have; but may be easily imposed on, by crafty men that lay in wait to deceive. Judge in your selves Brethren how intolerable would that Servant be in your Family, that should be always quarrelling at his Masters habit, or the directions given him for his work; and though he have good and wholsom food in plenty, yet dislikes the Cookery, and being reprov'd for his pride and curiosity, is obstinate and instigates his fellow-servants to desert the Family. But herein the Apostles example may direct us better how far we may, or may not do things indifferent, (and such as have some appearance of evil in them to others) rather than to give offence to a Brother, as in the case of meats, which had been declared unclean by the Law, (but that difference was by the Gospel abrogated) and were much more accounted polluted by having been offered unto Idols, yet the Apostle says, *meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse*, it is grace and not meat by which the heart is established; our Christian liberty is an Amulet against any corruption in such things, for though the practice be determined, the judgment is free, there is *libertas ad opus*.

1 Cor. 8. 8.

positum. So in the case of Circumcision before mentioned, which was so abrogated, that S. Paul says, *if ye be circumcised (i. e. with an opinion of the legal necessity of it) Christ shall profit you nothing :* Yet to the *Jews*, that he might win them, he became as a *Jew*, and then used Circumcision, *Acts* 16. 3. and to them that were without the Law, as without Law, that he might win the *Gentiles*, and then he would not Circumcise, and in all this he was Christs Freeman, though he made himself a servant to all.

Gal. 5. 2.

The Apostle knew that his Christian liberty was founded in freedom of Judgment and not of practice, and that neither *Circumcision nor Uncircumcision* were any thing, but the keeping of the Commandments. Now no actions of ours that are required in obedience to our Superiours about the Publick Worship, are so obnoxious to censure and scandal, as these were, but are under our Christian liberty. And as we ought to serve one another in love, in obedience to Gods commands; so ought we in obedience of the same, to *submit our selves to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake*, and not use our liberty as a Cloke of Maliciousness, or an occasion to the flesh, to cast off either our Love to our Brethren or Obedience to Magistrates. For to what end hath God, according to his promise, raised up Kings, to be Nursing Fathers to his Church, or what possibility is there, that they should provide for its peace, if they have not power in these External things? If therefore the things com-

1 Cor. 7.

19.

manded be indifferent, it is certain that obedience to the Magistrate is no indifferent thing, but as necessary, as peace and unity, which cannot otherwise be preserved.

Col. 3. 14.

Seventhly, The means are alway, as subservient, so inferior to the end: Now the end of the Commandment is Charity, as the Apostle saith, and therefore both he, and St. Peter require charity above all things, 1 *Pet.* 4. 8. When therefore these externals of religion, become apples of contention, they are forbidden fruit, which cannot be enjoyed without the breach of the great Commandment: and if they had each of them a particular precept, yet when lesser duties come in competition with greater, they cease to oblige. Private Laws yield to publick, humane Laws to the Laws of God; and among God's Laws, Positive Precepts yield to those that are moral and natural; A Vow, or an Oath concerning a thing lawful, if it hinder *Majus bonum Naturale*, ceaseth to oblige. The *Corban* might not be pleaded in Bar, to the relieving of Parents; much less may any Covenant oblige, against the Peace of the Church, and the Publick Parent (as some still plead, for that which they call the National Covenant.) Those things therefore which are matters of Discipline, and external order, how precisely soever enjoyned, ought to give place to those that are the more substantial parts of Religion, such as mercy and obedience to Magistrates, charity, peace, and unity among Christians;

stians ; and as we may disuse some things which have been generally received in the Church of God, (as were the kifs of charity, the love-feasts, and anointing of the Sick) so certainly we may use some other things, which are enjoined by our Superiors, for the sake of Order, and Unity. When St. Paul had established the Doctrine of Faith in the Church of Corinth, he tells them, that if about rites and ceremonies, *Any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custome, neither the Churches of God*: that is, the custom of the Church is a sufficient Plea against such contentious persons. Thus when the Council of Nica had composed the Articles of Faith in that Creed, they all with one consent approved of the Ancient rites and customes: τα ἀρχαία ἡμεῖς κειρίμεν. And *Sozomen* says, it was ever esteemed an unreasonable thing for those that agreed in the Substantials of Religion, τῶν ἡδυν ἕνεκα ἀλλήλους ἐπιχωρίζεσθαι, to separate from each other, for customes, and matters of doubtful disputation.

1 Cor. II.
16.

L. 7. c. 19.

And it is generally agreed, that the Churches, which are *sui juris*, agreeing in the same Faith, may differ in Rites and Ceremonies, which they have power to alter, or abrogate, and therefore *Calvin* says, they are *Mali filii*, wicked Sons, that will disturb the Peace of the Church, their Mother, for such external rites, and as the Pharisees in the Text seek to withdraw the Disciples by such objections against their Master, *Why eateth your Master with*

Publicans and Sinners? And yet certain it is, that the Authors of Sects and Divisions among us, have no better grounds for all the disorders and confusion, the proud contempt, and unchristian censures, the slander and vexation, that have been as so many evil spirits raised among us; and I desire, that such as are yet in the fault, would not only consider the insufficiency of the grounds, but also the mischievous consequences of our divisions, how directly opposite to our Saviour's rule in the Text, *I will have mercy, &c.*

Now, that there are Divisions among us, may be proved by the same arguments, that the Apostle useth to prove, that there were Divisions in the Church of *Corinth*, (*viz.*) when one saith, *I am of Paul*, and another, *I am of Apollos, &c.* which Divisions, as they cannot be warranted, but on a supposition of some great corruption in our Doctrine, or Worship, or some grand profaneness in our Members; so are they not raised without such thoughts in the hearts of those that do separate from us, as Mr. *Newcomen* observed in his Sermon at *St. Pauls*, *Febr. 8. 1646. p. 40.* 'Who are they that brand their Brethren with the title of Proud, Time-servers, Prelatical, Tyrannical, Antichristian, but such as separate? Who will say that they are of the same opinion in Fundamentals, and that their differences are, but in *minutioribus*; but, Why do they in matters of lesser moment transgress the Apostles rule? Why do they not keep

keep their opinions private, and have their faith to themselves before God? Why do they upon so small differences, withdraw from Communion with us, and gather themselves into distinct and separate Churches? This is certainly a Pharisaical leaven, that ferments and imbitters our spirits, and though the effects of it may be hid for a time, yet on every heat and agitation it spreads through the whole lump, and swells Men with Pride, and an unsociable sowness of Spirit.

And though the things wherein we differ, seem to be but small, and have a shew of piety, yet the consequences are so notoriously and really evil, that the most zealous pretences for the Discipline of Christ, are too narrow a Plaster to cover or cure the festred rancor and malice towards his members. Ceremonies are no fit matter to exercise our zeal and contention, but obedience and charity. Yet as the Ordinances and Rites that were retained by the believing Jews and Gentiles, were still a Wall of separation between them, and the Apostle calls it *the enmity*, so Eph. 2. 15. is it with us: The Jews and Samaritans differed chiefly about the place wherein they ought to Worship, upon which there grew a mortal hatred between them, so as that there was no commerce between them, they would not salute one another.----- *Nec monstrare vias eadem nisi Sacra colenti*; and it was accounted all one to be a Samaritan, and to have a Devil. So when once Men swerve from the center

ter and basis of charity, there is no consistency, but Men fall, first to vain jangling, and that increaseth to more ungodliness, for where bitter envying, or (as the original word is) zeal is, there is confusion, and every evil thing. *Behold*, saith St. James, *how great a matter a little fire kindleth*; if Men snatch a Coal from the Altar, it is blown up and down by popular breath, until it be raised into a flame, and hath this property at least of the fire of the Sanctuary, that the busie Levites will not permit it to go out.

I know it will be troublesome to others, for it is a terror to my self to recount, what cataracts and inundations of blood, our Church-divisions, that at first, as the prophets Cloud, were but as a hand-breadth, have rained down upon the whole Land. I shall give it you therefore in a Foreign instance, namely of the *Donatists in Africa*: who, because *Cecilian* their Bishop had admitted some to his Communion, whom they accused for *Traditors*, first withdrew from the Church, which as they pretended ought to consist of such only as were *re-digni*, holy, and without blemish: and because they had read in the *Canticles*, that *Christ* caused his Flock to rest *sub meridie*, they concluded, that their Party in the South of *Africa*, was that Flock; and hereupon they are very industrious to gather Congregations, and pick up one of a Family, and two or three of a Village, which, as *Optatus* observes, were generally of the weaker sort. *Aut exivit Uxor*

resedit Maritus, &c. The Wife is with-
 drawn from her Husband, the Son or Daugh-
 ter from their Parents. And my * Author sets * *Optatus*
 down the Method which those Seducers used,
Cai Sei ! or Caia Seia ! bonus homo, sed tradi-
tor, libera animam tuam : Thou good Man, or
 good Woman, thou art among Idolaters, and
 Superstitious persons, thou hast good affecti-
 ons, but they are not rightly placed, come
 out of *Babylon*, and deliver thy Soul : When
 they had thus increased their Party, they built
Basilicas non necessarias, more Churches than
 were necessary, and their Sermons were gene-
 rally Satyrs against the Catholicks, and though
 they were frequently confuted in private dis-
 putations, and condemned by many Synods at
 home, and several Councils abroad, and di-
 vers Edicts of the Emperors, yet never would
 they acquiesce, or be reconciled, but vexed
 the Churches of *Africa* for more than a Hun-
 dred Years, increasing their Numbers, and
 subdividing into Factions, as the *Primitivists*
 and *Maximianists*, the *Rogations* and *Callidi-*
ans, *Luciferians* and *Circumcellians*, and all of
 them *Donatists* ; and the *Circumcellians* were
 a Generation of Zealots, so fierce and impla-
 cable, that *Domitian* himself did not use more
 cruelty in shedding Christians blood, nor *Julian*,
 who was in *Rempublicam Christianam in-*
geniose nequam, could ever contrive more mis-
 chievous Instruments to destroy Christianity
 withall, than these *Donatists* were, and there-
 fore he countenanced them against the Catho-
 licks.

licks. And when at last their grievances, and the grounds of the Schisme came to be inquired into, in the Conference of *Carthage*, they could object nothing against the Catholicks, but what here the Pharisees did against *Christ*, *Why eateth your Master with Publicans and Sinners?* And can any Christian Spirit think, that this Plea for a Levitical Ceremony, will justify such barbarous cruelties and bloody Sacrifices before him, who hath said, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.* For let it be considered, that we live in a Church, which is established on the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, *Jesus Christ* himself being the chief corner-stone; a Church, wherein nothing is forbidden which the Word of God commands, nor any thing commanded, which that forbids; a Church, whose Constitutions are truly Ancient and Apostolical, for which it is envied by her Adversaries, though blamed by those that should be her Friends. In a word, a Church, wherein we may be as holy, devout, and charitable, as flesh and blood will permit us. This Church is protected by a Gracious King, settled on the Throne of his Fathers by many miracles of Providence, ready to gratifie the just desires of all good Men. And what sufficient reason can be given, to disturb the peace of such a Church, or to disobey the commands of such a King, for the preservation of peace and unity, under whom all things are lawful, except (*libertas perennandi*) a licence to undo our selves and others?

That

That there are some such imperfections in the Church, as discontented Persons may quarrel at, is no strange thing, and if causeless and frivolous objections may be a ground for Separation, there can never be a firm peace in any Church, seeing that ignorance, and interest, and malice will still prevail in the hearts of some Men; but that such things may be tolerated, and submitted to, rather than to destroy the foundations of peace and unity, and rent the Body of *Christ*, is the judgment of all sober Christians. Our Saviour did not withdraw himself and his Disciples from the *Jewish* Synagogues, because there was a High-Priest, and the Scribes and Pharisees sate in *Moses* Chair: Nor did the Apostle perswade the Christians to forsake the Church of *Corinth*, wherein were many profane Persons, and great abuses; but he dissuaded them from their divisions, which had given occasion to those scandals. And if the Church in imitation of her Master, do retain some sinful persons in her Communion, in hope to reform them, it is no charitable course to seduce her Disciples, as here the Pharisees did, *Why eatest thou your Master with Publicans and Sinners?*

*Tanta est
imperitia
morositas
ut vel in
rebus probatissimis
babeat semper quid
reprehendat. Cal.*

A tolerable Sore is better than a dangerous remedy. Mr. Hooker.

If the Church did impose such Sacrifices, as the Church of *Rome* doth, for the Living, and the Dead; a few Pence at the *Pope's* Shrine, for Sins past, present, and to come; if it did require that daily Mock-sacrifice of the Body and Blood of *Christ*, in the Mass, of which they themselves can have no great esteem, seeing

ing they order it to give place to the *superbia* or Worship of the Cross, on a certain day set apart for that end, on which, (saith *Darand* (*Rationale* l. 6. c. 77.) *Horā nonā convent ad adorandam crucem vacare,*) they must be wholly intent upon the Worshipping of the Cross, as if that were indeed the Altar that did Sanctifie the Sacrifice; or if they did impose such gaudy and numerous Ceremonies as should quite hide and obscure the substance of Worship and Devotion, that it might be said of the Church as the Poet says of his gaudy Girl—*Pars minima est ipsa puella sui*; Then we might have cause not only to recede, but to resist, as the Martyrs did: but to contend as *Hugh Broughton*, and *Mr. Ainsworth* did, to Separation and enmity upon a needless controversy, whether *Aarons* Ephod were of a Blue colour, or Sea-water-green, and *Tragedias agere in nuptiis*, to act Tragedies upon no other ground than our own fears or jealousies, and to use our Christian Brethren, as the Heathen did their Predecessors, wrap them up in the skins of Wolves or Bears by defaming, slandering and condemning them, as Profane and Antichristian persons, and then bait and devour them; this is to deal worse with them than the *Pharisees* did with Christ.

Suppose there were a better Government and discipline revealed than ever yet was known, or practised in the Church; suppose the Presbytery were agreeable to the pattern in the Mount, as some phrase it; (and if they had said

said to the pattern of the air, it had been alike intelligible; yet if it could not be erected without Rebellion and Rapine, without the effusion of Christian blood, and raising the foundations of Churches and Kingdoms, that were well established in the truth, and peace of Christ, the Text doth warrant the rejection of it, *I will have mercy and not Sacrifice.*

But wherein, I pray, doth the Discipline opposed by *Presbyterians, &c.* to the Peace and Unity of the Church, exceed or parallel that which is already established? or is it as venerable for antiquity as the *Jewish* Sacrifices were? is there any thing of such beauty as the Temple, and the several Orders of the Priesthood? is it such a prop to the Royal Tribe as the Priesthood was, or doth it serve the Ends of Religion, as the Sacrifices did? Alas very little of all this will appear, it is but an invention of yesterday, that like *Jonah's* gourd sprung up in a night, and hath a worm alwayes gnawing at the root, and yet men think they do well to be angry, and to contend for it, even to the death of their Brethren.

Hath not God said I hate robbery though it be for burnt-offerings? will God be well-pleased with such as sacrifice their Loyalty and Charity, and all moral virtues, to a pretended Reformation of Ceremonies? This Mask is so worn out that a *Pharisee* would be ashamed of it, and yet a late Gentleman hath
raked

taken it up, and though his business was to cast fire into the several parts of the Nation, especially into the Churches, yet makes himself very merry, and tells us in his Rehearsal, that the good Old Cause was (not only good enough but) too good to be fought for; but God forbid, that others should be of his mind, to think only so well of it, as to fight for it again, for it is so impossible, that any Cause fought for with such horrid circumstances as that was, should be good, that if an Angel from Heaven, (much less when only one transformed into an Angel of light,) should assert it, I have warrant enough not to believe him.

Gal. 1.8.

The Sacrifices and Disciplines of the Law were termed by the Apostle *θυσιασμοὶ* *παράτης* 2 Cor. 3. 7. the ministration of death, because without shedding of blood (*χωρίς ἀναιμάτου θυσίας*) there was no remission. And if in this, the Discipline contended for do resemble the Jewish Sacrifices, in the shedding the blood, not of Beasts, but of Christians, and cutting and dividing the very body of Christ, in fire and smoke, and making whole Kingdoms burnt-offerings, we may be assured the God of Mercy cannot be well-pleased with such Sacrifices.

Heb. 9.22.

The Honour of God, the Success of the Gospel, and Salvation of Souls, is not concerned in the erecting of such a Discipline, nor in contending about Ceremonies, which are not otherwise hurtful to those great ends, but

but by our needless contentions about them. If we could order our Conversions according to the Doctrine of the Church, we need not fear of displeasing God by Conforming our Devotions to the Liturgy of the Church, for *the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*: he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

‘ There is no Reason we should be thus dis-
 ‘ joyned and mutually branded. This man is
 ‘ right (ye say) that man is not right, this
 ‘ sound, that rotten; and how so, dear Chri-
 ‘ stians, what for Ceremonies and circumstan-
 ‘ ces, for Rotchers, or Rounds, or Squares?
 ‘ Let me tell you he is right that hath a right
 ‘ heart to his God what Form soever he is for.
 ‘ The Kingdom of God doth not stand in
 ‘ meats or drinks, in stuffs or colours or
 ‘ fashions, in noises or gestures, it stands in
 ‘ Holiness and Righteousness, in Godliness
 ‘ and Charity, in Peace and Obedience, and
 ‘ if we have happily attained unto these, God
 ‘ doth not stand upon trifles and niceties of
 ‘ indifferency, and why should we? Away
 ‘ then with all false jealousies and uncharitable
 ‘ glosses of each others actions and estates.
 ‘ Let us all in the fear of God be intreated in
 ‘ the bowels of our Dear Redeemer, as we
 ‘ Love our Selves, our Land, our Church,
 ‘ the Gospel, to combine our counsels and en-
 ‘ deavours to the holding of the Unity of the
 ‘ Spirit in the bond of peace, and labour and

*By. Hall
 in a Sermon
 of the mis-
 chief of
 Faction.
 p. 83.*

*Epist. ad
Catech.
Genev.*

* study, not how to widen, and gall, and ran-
* kle, but how to salve and heal these unhappy
* sores of the Church and State. And as
Mr. Calvin saith, When we shall come to that
great Tribunal, where we are to render an ac-
count of our Ministry, There shall be no
question concerning Ceremonies, neither shall
this conformity in outward things be brought
to examination, but the lawful use of our li-
berty, and that shall be adjudged lawful that
conduceth most to edification. Let therefore
all our care, circumspection and diligence
tend to this, which we may know so far to
succeed, as we become Proficients in the se-
rious fear of God, in sincere piety, and un-
feigned Sanctity of manners.

I know you will all joyn with me, to con-
demn those pitiful pretences which are still to
be heard from the mouths of some profane
persons, to excuse their not frequenting of the
Lords Supper, a Sacrament which may assure
them of infinite comfort, and blessings, if
they did not *obicem ponere*, make themselves
uncapable. They pretend a grudge against a
neighbour, on a *punctilio* of profit or reputa-
tion, or perhaps a pet against their Minister,
for demanding his Dues, or reproving their
Vices, and therefore they cannot come. It is
the very same that is pleaded against the Com-
munion of the Church, in whose Peace and
Communion they might have Peace and Sal-
vation; they have some perverse Opinions of
their Brethren, or Minister, some point of
Repu-

Reputation, profit, or trade lies in the way, or some strange reports have been whispered in their ears, by Schismatical persons, the truth whereof they had never time to examine, nor discretion to judge of, and yet there are such invincible prejudices created within them, that they cannot be reconciled, *Non amo te, nec possum dicere quare*, that is they must keep at a distance, and live in hatred and malice, though they have no reason for it. But when God shall call us to an account for our ignorance, and uncharitableness, and make inquisition for the Authors and grounds of all those divisions, that obstinacy and cruelty that hath been practised among us, what shall we answer him? can we say as *Saul* did except it be falsely, I have kept the Commandments of the Lord? it will be replied then, what meaneth the lowing of the Oxen, and the bleating of the Sheep that are gone astray? if it be pretended that they are set a-part for a more solemn Sacrifice, the Prophet demands, hath the Lord as great delight in Sacrifice, and burnt-offerings, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? *Behold to obey (the Commands of God for Peace and Charity) is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of Rams.* Shall we say all our divisions were occasioned by misinformation, that the Cause of God and the Kingdom of Christ were concerned, or that it was done in opposition to a Ceremony, because we would not receive the Sacrament on our Knees, or see our Minister wear a Surplice, or because we would not submit to the injunctions of our Rulers in matters of Decency, or which is as much as any of the rest, because we would not eat with *Publicans* and

Ubi ad summum illud Tribunal ventum fuerit ubi reddenda erit olim functionis nostrae ratio, minima erit de Ceremoniis questio.
Cal. Epist. in Catech. Genev.

sinnners? Consider, if this be not contrary to our Saviours rule, of preferring Mercy above Sacrifice, when we sacrifice Mercy and Peace, and Charity, which are so strictly commanded, to our own ignorance or interest, or to the discontent and maliciousness of wicked men, which are so peremptorily forbidden.

Remember the Blessing pronounced to the Peace-makers by our Saviour, and the Curse against them that are Contentious, and obey not the Gospel, and then think, whether true Comfort and Piety, do lye most in being

Deterior est qui recedit ab Ecclesie concordia, & in heresim aut Schisma demigrat, quam qui impure vivit salvis dogmatibus. Eras. de Eccl. concordia, p. 113.

instruments of Peace, of Mercy and good Works, or in being Fire-brands in the Church of God, instruments of Satan, accusers of the Brethren, enemies of Peace, and authors of Confusion. And think often, that God hath made our following of Peace, a condition of Salvation, as well as of Holiness. *Follow peace with all men,* (with all our Christian Brethren more especially) *without which no man shall see the Lord.*

The Plea of *Templum Domini*, will but aggravate the guilt of such as do steal, and murder, and commit Adultery, and swear falsely, *Is this House which is called by my Name become a den of Robbers?* What greater dishonour can we do the Church of God than under pretence of Zeal for Reformation of things inconsiderable and doubtful, to open a gap for the greatest impiety, such as Rebellion, and Schism, a contempt of things Sacred and Civil, which have been after mature deliberation and Primitive custom legally established in the Church of God?

If men do indeed desire the honour and safety of Religion,

ligion, and the whole Nation, there is no better method of effecting it, than by a hearty endeavour, that we may all speak; and mind the same things, and *keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace*: by this the power of godliness will appear, as well as the form of it, when that Dove-like spirit shall possess our Souls, and banish all those proud and wrathful dispositions, that do as much hinder the righteousness of *James 1.20.* God, as love and charity to our Brethren.

What an honour is it to be a Repairer of the breaches of *Sion*, to Tettle the Ark of God, that hath been so long in a wandring condition, to convert Thousands of Souls from the error of their ways, and as the good *Samaritan*, pour in Wine and Oyl to their wounds, that have fallen among Thieves, in their journeying from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*? If *Christ* will so graciously reward at the last day, all those temporal and bodily supplies, that we bestow on his distressed Members, as himself hath expressed, *Matth. 25. 34.* much more bountifully will he recompense all that labour of love, which we manifest for the preservation of those Souls, which he redeemed with his precious blood, to reduce a sinner from the error of his ways, by a mild reproof, a seasonable instruction, a peaceable and pious example. This is to be as *Moses* was to *Aaron*, (*Exod. 4. 16.*) instead of a God and a Saviour unto them. Great is the advantage and opportunity that those Men have, who by their parts and reputation have an influence upon the spirits and consciences of their misguided Brethren, if they would instruct them in this plain lesson of preferring works of mercy and charity above all external services whatsoever; if they would convince them, how hateful to God a Pharisaical temper is, that disposeth Men to quarrel about external circumstances,

wherein they are not at all concerned, and to neglect the most necessary duties of the Gospel, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, which are of Eternal concernment to their Souls. In so doing, they may save themselves, and perhaps thousands of those that know them, and are ready to follow them. And if there be a pleasure in doing good, there is no pleasure like that, which will arise, from being instrumental in so publick a blessing, wherein the very being of Religion, the peace of the Nation, & the salvation of souls are bound together, especially in this juncture of affairs, when for want of exercising mercy to one another, we expose our selves as a Sacrifice to our common enemies. *Misericordiam volo*, is God's voice to us, and may it ever be heard in our Land. If he should have dealt with us, as we do one with another, & lay hold of every provocation to destroy us, the whole Land might have been a sacrifice to his Justice: but *he hath in the midst of judgment remembered mercy*, and seeing it is his mercy that we are not consumed, let us not be so unmerciful to our selves, as to

Gal. 5. 15. bite & devour one another till we be utterly consumed. *Misericordiam volo*, is the Kings Motto, as well as God's; He hath sometime graciously manifested his readiness, to dispense with the use of those established forms of worship, which himself retains as most agreeable to the Word of God, and in which, the Arguments and Sufferings of his Royal Father have confirmed him (next to a *Ius Divinum*) against all doubts or contradictions: yet to shew that he also loves mercy, rather than sacrifice, he indulged the omission of them, as long as the peace and welfare of the Nation could bear it; how ill do they requite this great condescension, that will not recede one step from their pretended holy, but really unpeaceable Discipline, to follow such a Divine and
Royal

Royal example, as both God and the King do propose to them? *Misericordiam volo*, should be our Petition to the King to pardon all that obstinacy and peevishness of spirit, that keeps us still in disobedience and contradiction to those good and wholesome Laws, whereby we might lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. 2. 2. Sure I am *Misericordiam volo* will one day be our Petition to God, that he would not enter into judgment with us; and we may know what our sentence will be then, for by the Gospel Rom. 2. 16. we must be judged, and that assures us that *with what judgment we judge we shall be judged*; and, *he shall have judgment without mercy, that sheweth no mercy*, James 2. 13. *Voluit Deus ut quisq; sit sibi mensura misericordiae*. And now *Misericordiam volo*, shall be my Plea also, that you would pardon my trespassing on your patience, and that you would suffer a word of Exhortation. God hath planted us in his own Vineyard, hedged us about with *Isay 5*. his Almighty providence, and been at the expence of Miracles of Mercy, to restore and establish us on foundations of peace and righteousness: And now that he expects Grapes, *let us not bring forth wild grapes*, he looketh for judgment, *let us not bring forth oppression*, and when he expects righteousness, *let us not bring forth a cry of our own sins and divisions*, and the sufferings of our brethren, lest he take away our hedge, and we be eaten up, and lest he break down our wall, and we be trodden down of them, that bear evil will to *Sion*, and watch opportunities to lay us wast.

If there be any fanatick-principle among us, (and there are certainly very many) this is one, to think that purity of Ordinances will commute for the impurity of our lives,

lives, or that we are either better, or safer, for being of this, or that Party: *Lot* and *Noah* are commended for being righteous in a wicked, and perverse Generation; their condemnation will be the greater, that are wicked and unrighteous in a holy Nation, and Schismatical in the Communion of a Church truly Catholick and Apostolical: Let none of us be as the Sons of *Eli*, Sons of *Belial*, that snatched at the flesh while it was raw, and served themselves before the Lord; whereby they made the offerings of the Lord to be abhorred of the People: Let none of us be like the Proud and Hypocritical Pharisees, who thought to cloke their real impieties, in neglecting works of mercy and peace, by a pretence of zeal for the minute circumstances of external Worship and Discipline; but let us offer to God the sacrifices of a humble and contrite heart, and not forget to do good, and

Heb. 13. 16. *communicate, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased: and then he will accept our praises, and answer our Prayers with a Misericordiam volo: I will have mercy upon you, and heal your Land. Which God grant for the sake of Jesus Christ, Amen.*

FINIS.

